

<!DOCTYPE html>

Session ID	42
Session Title	Fact or fiction: the power of communities with knowledge of their pasts
Start Time	Wed Dec 18 14:00:00
Room	739

What are the benefits of local communities being involved in public archaeology and caring for heritage – and to whom? We welcome 10-minute position papers that promote or critique how publics are empowered and/or enriched by a knowledge of, and engagement with, the past – and how these relate to local, regional and national identity. Position papers should respond to one or more of the following prompts – or raise their own (related to the theme!):

- Does knowledge of the past give communities power, add to notions of identity and cultural heritage – or if not, what is community archaeology for?
- How do we measure the impact of an intangible feeling of place, identity or general wellbeing that results from a 'successful' community project – should we even try?
- Should these questions be our concern as archaeologists, if the 'prime directive' is the excavation and understanding of a site, with preservation by record or in-situ?
- Are such outcomes for other disciplines to study once the trenches are backfilled and the info-boards are in place?
- Where would this stance leave the HLF model of funding community projects?
- Has this financial model driven the situation too far in favour of assumed outcomes and impact?

14:00	David Jennings, University of York	Introduction	<p>A session to debate the power of communities with knowledge of their past.</p> <p>What are the benefits of local communities being involved in public archaeology and caring for heritage – and to whom? These papers will discuss if, how and why publics are empowered and/or enriched by a knowledge of, and engagement with, the past – and how these relate to local, regional and national identity. Speakers will respond to one or more of the following prompts – or raise their own (related to the theme!):</p> <p>Does knowledge of the past give communities power, add to notions of identity and cultural heritage – or if not, what is community archaeology for?</p> <p>How do we measure the impact of an intangible feeling of place, identity or general wellbeing that results from a 'successful' community project – should we even try?</p> <p>Should these questions be our concern as archaeologists, if the 'prime directive' is the excavation and understanding of a site, with preservation by record or in-situ? Are such outcomes for other disciplines to study once the trenches are backfilled and the info-boards are in place?</p> <p>Where would this stance leave the HLF model of funding community projects? Has this financial model driven the situation too far in favour of assumed outcomes and impact?</p>
-------	------------------------------------	--------------	--

14:05	Hilary Leatham, University of Chicago	Heritage and its Discontents: The Power Dynamics of Heritage Projects in Southern Mexico.	<p>Across the Mexican state of Oaxaca, heritage projects are imagined by institutions and communities as 'sustainable futures', the catch-all answer to local economic woes. This paper argues that, at least in Oaxaca, communities do not necessarily benefit from public archaeology or these 'sustainable' heritage projects. Quite the opposite, I contend that the ethic of preservation undergirding archaeology and heritage projects paradoxically creates its own inverse over time, leading to the destruction or erosion of social and affective relations. Rather than being empowered by engagement with the past, community members struggle with what it means to live 'amidst the ruins.' Archaeological sites become symbols of a reified and commodified pre-hispanic past which relegates indigenous communities once more to the margins of Mexican history, despite the knowledge and jobs proffered by community archaeology projects. More often than not, under the guise of sustainability, sites are remade into tourist destinations, indexes of development, or come to embody other forms of exchange and extraction that dispossess and displace the very communities dwelling around them. Community archaeology also tends to crystallize asymmetries of power, and is thus at least potentially violent. In asserting that community archaeology is a double-edged sword, I would also ask that we interrogate issues of accessibility and empathy as we determine what ways the past might benefit communities in a pragmatic sense.</p>
14:25	Catriona Cooper, University of Cambridge / University of York	Stories in the Sky: community groups and storytelling at Park Hill flats	<p>Park Hill Flats have been controversial since construction in the 1950s, with their brutalist style influenced by Le Corbusier, Habitation housing principle, and an era of optimism for improved working-class housing, saw the slums (dubbed 'Little Chicago') cleared and replaced with utopian 'Streets in the Sky'; design was meant to foster community building. The dream died with Thatcherism, and the flats bore the brunt of the ensuing deprivation and neglect in Sheffield (portrayed on screen in <i>The Full Monty</i> (1997) and <i>This is England '90</i> (2015)), but demolition plans were halted when English Heritage 'listed' them in 1998. Regeneration is creating a diverse community in a building that embodies a strong sense of local identity in Sheffield and regional identity in Yorkshire.</p> <p>Our AHRC project team interviewed the Residents' Association about their responses to immersive experiences and aspirations for telling their own tales of Park Hill life; they are enthusiastic about contributing their stories to ongoing re-conceptualisation of Park Hill, even where presenting challenging narratives of unemployment, depression, crime and loss. The stories residents want to tell about the flats do not consider the tangible remains, but instead consider the building as a physical anchor to local and regional intangible heritages and Sheffield identity. They are starting to tell these stories through organised tours of the building for diverse audiences interested in photography, architecture or heritage as well as school groups. We argue that through storytelling this community is advocating for itself its own notions of identity and culture heritage in this place.</p>
14:45	Nathaniel Welsby, University of Lancashire	What does archaeology actually mean to those in primary education?	<p>This paper will discuss how a spur of inspiration and self-reflection occurred from completing outreach in schools in Manchester following on from a discussion with a primary school teacher and her students and their connections to their past and how they perceive archaeology. For those in the profession who work with archaeology day in day out we take it sometimes as very much for granted but what about those that rarely see what we see? How do they perceive us? How can we pass on our knowledge?</p> <p>This paper will also discuss how community archaeology in mainstream education maybe missing the mark and how with more connections with local archaeology groups, an increased level of access at sites and more input from academics within the field may greatly increase the impact of our profession within education.</p>
15:05	Claire Boardman, University of York	communal memory and social cohesiveness	<p>Our professional and everyday use of the term 'community' is ubiquitous and assumes levels of communal memory and social cohesiveness (i.e. shared meanings and values) which may not exist in reality, especially within highly mobile urban populations. Further, current approaches to public outreach and participation do not make visible and therefore open to challenge our archaeology/heritage related values inherent in our designs for community-based archaeology.</p> <p>Using a case study involving two relatively recent York based community excavations: Hungate and Burnholme School (both related to the same urban neighbourhood), this paper will highlight how our uncritical practices act to undermine our stated objectives i.e. to ascribe ownership and therefore power over the future of local archaeology/heritage to local populations.</p> <p>Despite being the cornerstone of human trading interactions for millennia, and the subject of academic study for over a century, the cultural sector has been slow to explore and adopt highly successful strategies such as personalisation and value-centred approaches, for public engagement design. However, in line with increased accessibility to and functionality within personal, mobile technology, this situation is rapidly changing within GLAM organisations, but what about public archaeology?</p>

15:25 BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
15:55 Hayley Saul, Western Sydney University; Emma Waterton, Western Sydney University	Heritage and Affect in Nepal's Post-Disaster Recovery: Working with the Community of Langtang	<p>A belief in the importance of community engagement has been prevalent in the field of heritage studies for over four decades. Recently, the field has commenced a critical interrogation of what it means to conduct 'community' heritage work, as well as a considering the associated political, ethical and personal difficulties that such work entails. These issues are heightened, of course, in post-disaster landscapes, which is the context for our presentation. We will focus on the Langtang Valley in the Nepal Himalayas following the 2015 earthquakes, which resulted in the destruction of the entire village of Langtang. Soon after, the valley became a busy site for local-global actants jostling in the aftermath of disaster to survive, recover, rebuild and remember. In this context, we became attuned to the ways that heritage management interfaces with disaster management theory. The latter, as we will discuss, has almost exclusively arisen from realist agendas – that is, strategies for action that are triggered by managerial concerns (particularly how to measure risk), the politics of vulnerability and how to plan and organise resource allocation. Problematically, much of this work tends to equate security, wellbeing and safety with material resources. As we will illustrate, even if this work is deemed successful, it only meets a portion of the recovery needs of those in the community.</p> <p>In this presentation, we join a new wave of scholars who are interested in the affective dimensions of disaster response, which leads our current research to take a closer look at comfort and kinship, as well as feelings of recovery as indicators of improved wellbeing. Reflecting on our most recent efforts at community engagement in the valley, which have revolved around the creation of a Langtang Heritage Trail, we will explore the importance of conducting disaster-recovery that is attuned to the affective experiences of heritage. In particular, we draw on the landscape stories we have been gathering since before the 2015 earthquakes to illustrate some of the traditions used by the inhabitants to navigate feelings of security, enchantment and hope.</p>
16:40 Harald Fredheim, University of York; David Jennings, University of York	Q&A and Discussant conclusions	A round up of the session, with a Q&A and overall concluding thoughts
17:30 END	END	END